

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 50

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 92

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 50—Relative to Pope John Paul II.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 22, 2005.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 50, Tran. Pope John Paul II.

This measure would note with deep sorrow and solemn mourning the death of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, would extend heartfelt sympathy to all people who have been touched by the passing of Pope John Paul II, would commend Pope John Paul II for his ability to transcend the bounds of religion, race, and political thought, becoming a formidable champion, uniter, and defender in humanity's struggle for peace and basic human rights, and would call on all the people of California to reflect on the life and legacy of Pope John Paul II during this international period of remembrance.

WHEREAS, Karol Jozef Wojtyła, known as John Paul II since his October 16, 1978, election to the papacy until his death on April 2, 2005, was born in Wadowice, Poland, on May 18, 1920, the day of the "Polish Miracle," that nation's first military victory in 200 years and a day that set in motion events that briefly restored Poland's independence; and

WHEREAS, He made his First Holy Communion at age 9, was confirmed at 18, and saw his mother, father, and eldest brother all die before he turned 21, and upon graduation from Marcin Wadowita High School in Wadowice, he enrolled in Krakow's Jagiellonian University in 1938 and in a school for drama; and

WHEREAS, The Nazi occupation forces closed Krakow's Jagiellonian University, where he was enrolled in 1939, and forced him to work in a lime quarry and then in a chemical factory; and

WHEREAS, In 1942, aware of his call to the priesthood after nearly being killed by a Nazi, he began courses in the clandestine seminary of Krakow, run by Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha, archbishop of Krakow, and at the same time, Karol Wojtyła participated in the Polish resistance against the occupying Nazis as one of the pioneers of the Rhapsodic Theatre, which performed clandestinely in order to keep Polish culture alive; and

WHEREAS, In 1948, upon his return to Poland after studying theology in Rome, he served as vicar of several parishes in Krakow and the surrounding area, as well as chaplain for the university students until 1951, when he took up again his studies on philosophy and theology; and

WHEREAS, He was a distinguished professor of moral theology and social ethics in the major seminary of Krakow and in the Faculty of Theology of Lublin; and

WHEREAS, He resisted his nation's communist government by leading his students on clandestine camping trips into the Polish mountains, which those students later described as the only times they ever felt truly free; and

WHEREAS, On July 4, 1958, Pope Pius XII appointed Wojtyła auxiliary bishop of Krakow, for which he was consecrated on September 28, 1958, in Wawel Cathedral, Krakow, by Archbishop Eugeniusz Baziak; and

WHEREAS, On January 13, 1964, he was nominated Archbishop of Krakow by Pope Paul VI, who made him a cardinal June 26, 1967; and

WHEREAS, As archbishop of Krakow he forced the communist government to build a church in a formerly churchless town; and

WHEREAS, On October 16, 1978, Karol Wojtyła began his pontificate as Pope John Paul II; and

WHEREAS, His first words as pope were, "Be not afraid"; and

WHEREAS, He was the first non-Italian pope since the 1522 election of Adrian VI and the first Pole to ever sit on the Throne of Peter; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II used his pontificate in a unique fashion, emerging as more than just the leader of the Catholic Church, but a global voice against communism, oppression, and tyranny, and working both in public and private to exercise his influence against the forces of injustice; and

WHEREAS, In the 1980s, Pope John Paul II was a vocal supporter of the Polish Solidarity movement and his support for striking workers at the Gdansk Shipyard was a key to the downfall of communism in Poland, which in turn began a chain of events ultimately leading to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II was acknowledged by Mikhail Gorbachev to have played an essential role in the liberation of those who lived under European communism when he stated "everything that happened in Eastern Europe . . . would have been impossible without this Pope"; and

WHEREAS, His criticism of dictators in countries such as Poland and the Soviet Bloc, Paraguay, Chile, Nicaragua, and the Philippines encouraged opposition movements that eventually brought down those governments; and

WHEREAS, In 1998, Pope John Paul II visited Cuba to speak directly to the Cuban people and their Communist rulers, calling for political and religious freedom, the release of political prisoners, a recognition of the right to express one's faith "in the context of public life," and the importance of fundamental human dignities, including that "each person enjoying freedom of expression, being free to undertake initiatives and make proposals within civil society, and enjoying appropriate freedom of association" is a necessity; and

WHEREAS, His was the third longest pontificate in the history of the papacy; and

WHEREAS, In his 26 ½ years as Pope, John Paul II held nine consistories in which he created 232 cardinals, including all but two of the 115 Cardinal Electors who entered the Conclave and elected his successor, Pope Benedict XVI, previously known to the world as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger; and

WHEREAS, During his pontificate, the Holy Father named over 3,500 of the world's nearly 4,200 bishops; and

WHEREAS, He wrote 14 encyclicals, 14 apostolic exhortations, 11 apostolic constitutions, 42 apostolic letters and 28 *Moto proprio*, in addition to hundreds of other messages and letters; and

WHEREAS, He wrote five books: *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (1994), *Gift and Mystery* (1996), *Roman Triptych* (poetry, 2003), *Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way* (2004) and *Memory and Identity* (2005); and

WHEREAS, He planned and inaugurated the Great Jubilee Year of 2000; and

WHEREAS, The 84-year-old Pope presided over 15 synods of bishops: six ordinary (1980, 1983, 1987, 1990, 1994, 2001), one extraordinary (1985) and eight special assemblies (1980, 1991, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998 (two synods) and 1999); and

WHEREAS, The Holy Father undertook 104 pastoral visits outside Italy, the last of which was to Lourdes in August 2004, and 143 trips within Italy and nearly 700 within his diocese of Rome, including visits to 301 of the 325 diocesan parishes, in addition to religious institutes, universities, seminaries, hospitals, rest homes, prisons and schools; and

WHEREAS, With his 247 foreign and Italian pastoral visits, Pope John Paul II logged 700,380 miles, which equals 28 times the earth's circumference or three times the distance between the earth and moon; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II delivered his message of hope to millions of Americans during his five trips to the United States, including two trips to California; and

WHEREAS, While he was in Rome, the Pope welcomed an average of one million people per year, including 500,000 who attended the weekly general audiences and Angelus addresses, in addition to those who came for special liturgical functions such as Christmas and Easter Masses, beatifications and canonizations; and

WHEREAS, He also received approximately 150,000–180,000 people per year in audiences granted to particular groups, heads of state and governments; and

WHEREAS, In 1981, Pope John Paul II survived an assassination attempt after being shot twice by Mehmet Ali Agca in St. Peter's Square, whom the Pope later personally met and forgave; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II, a survivor of fascism, communism, and terrorism, was a tireless voice for morality, decency, and human rights; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II served as more than just a spiritual leader for the world's Catholics, but as one of the most influential and inspirational world leaders of the 20th and 21st centuries; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II ministered to Catholic and non-Catholic alike, providing a personal example of grace, endurance, compassion, courage, sacrifice, and foresight; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II sought to heal divisions between the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations and confessions, Judaism, and Islam, expressing sadness and regret for the individual sins of present and former Catholics and promoting reconciliation and dialogue through the first-ever papal visits to synagogues and mosques, as well as visits to areas of historic conflict, including the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, In 1995, Pope John Paul II wrote of "the incomparable worth of the human person," noting that "Even in the midst of difficulties and uncertainties, every person sincerely open to truth and goodness can, by the light of reason and the hidden action of grace, come to recognize . . . the sacred value of human life . . . and can affirm the right of every human being to have this primary good respected to the highest degree"; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II carried on an active correspondence with world leaders during the 1980s, involving the Church in efforts to promote peace by reducing tensions, and exerting his moral authority to persuade the superpowers to engage in a "dialogue" that succeeded in reducing conventional and nuclear weapons and helped to avert nuclear war; and

WHEREAS, During his 1979 visit to Ireland, Pope John Paul II made an impassioned plea for an end to violence in Northern Ireland, saying, "On my knees, I beg you to turn away from the path of violence and to return to the ways of peace"; and

WHEREAS, He was a consistent voice for peace, opposing wars such as those in Iraq and Chechnya and urging mediation, because respect for and development of human life require peace; and

WHEREAS, He called for respect of the environment and noted that man's dominion over nature is not absolute, while reminding us that nature was destined for the common good of past, present, and future humanity, and that the use of natural resources cannot be divorced from respect from moral imperatives; and

WHEREAS, He stood up for organized labor, the unborn, the aged, the infirm, the disabled, the family, marriage, the hungry and the poor, and against euthanasia, tyranny, assisted suicide, the violation of human persons, diseases, materialism, consumerism, and oppression; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II changed the course of history, leading the Catholic Church through a dramatic and remarkable period, and into Christianity's third millennium; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II devoted his life to the amelioration of the human cost of terror and oppression through his dedication to truth, forgiveness, and the development of a vibrant public moral culture; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II articulated the importance of undergirding individual liberty with a “moral order,” embraced the poor and oppressed masses of the world, and encouraged governments and the faithful to attend to the needs of those who are less fortunate; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II changed the lives of millions of people across the globe; and

WHEREAS, Even in his last days, Pope John Paul II offered an example of unselfish service to his fellow man; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II died on April 2, 2005, after heroically proclaiming the value and dignity of human life through his long physical illness and suffering; and

WHEREAS, The passing of Pope John Paul II has been mourned by billions of people around the world; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II is already being referred to as Pope John Paul the Great; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature:

(1) Notes with deep sorrow and solemn mourning the death of His Holiness Pope John Paul II;

(2) Extends its heartfelt sympathy to all people who have been touched by the passing of Pope John Paul II;

(3) Commends Pope John Paul II for his ability to transcend the bounds of religion, race, and political thought, becoming a formidable champion, uniter, and defender in humanity’s struggle for peace and basic human rights; and

(4) Calls on all the people of California to reflect on the life and legacy of Pope John Paul II during this international period of remembrance; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the Apostolic Nuncio at the Nunciature of the Holy See in Washington, DC, the President of Poland, the Governor of the State of California, and the United States Secretary of State.